



GUIDE TO LICENSURE
IN THE UNITED STATES FOR
**INTERNATIONAL
APPLICANTS**

ncarb.org/foreign

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT IN THE UNITED STATES?

All U.S. architects must demonstrate that they meet education, experience, and examination requirements in order to become licensed. Depending on your licensure status and education history, you may be eligible for licensure in the U.S. Whether you are licensed abroad or earned your education internationally, there is a path to licensure in the U.S. for you.

This guide to licensure for foreign applicants provides an overview of each pathway to U.S. licensure—including the Foreign Architect Path, Foreign Educated Path, and mutual recognition agreements.

Read through our guide to learn which path is the best fit for you and understand the requirements you'll need to meet in order to become an architect in the United States.

TIP: *There is no national license to practice architecture in the United States. The 55 U.S. states and territories each have a licensing board, which regulates architecture and issues licenses specific to their jurisdiction. Each licensing board's rules and regulations are unique. Learn more at ncarb.org/requirements.*




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WHICH PATH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

I have a degree from a university outside the U.S. or Canada



I have a degree in architecture from a university outside the U.S. or Canada, but I do NOT have an architecture license.
I am not qualified for the Foreign Architect Path.

FOREIGN EDUCATED PATH — Go to: [page 6](#)

I am licensed to practice architecture outside the U.S. or Canada



I have a degree in architecture from a university outside the U.S. or Canada OR a non-accredited architecture-related degree that allowed me to get licensed in a foreign country.
I have an active license in good standing to practice architecture in a country outside the United States AND my license allows me to work on any size or type of building project, without the supervision of others.

FOREIGN ARCHITECT PATH — Go to: [page 10](#)

I am licensed in Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom



I have a foreign license from Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT PATH — Go to: [page 22](#)

I have a NAAB-accredited degree OR

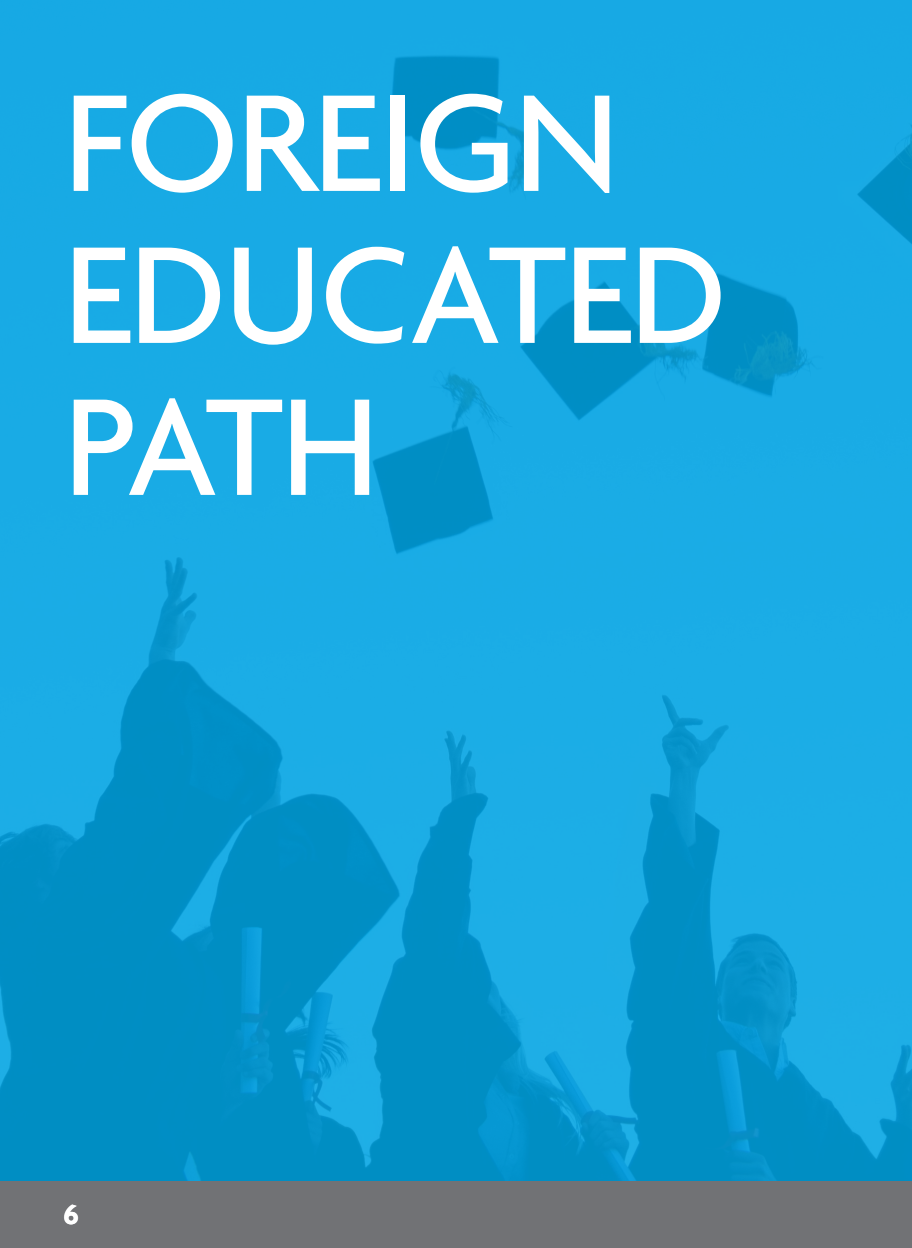
I am not eligible for the Foreign Architect or Foreign Education Paths



I have a NAAB-accredited degree OR I do not meet the criteria for the other paths (for example, do not have an architecture or architecture-related degree in a foreign country and do not have a foreign license).

STANDARD PATH — Go to: ncarb.org/destination-architect

FOREIGN EDUCATED PATH

A blue-tinted photograph of graduates celebrating. In the foreground, several silhouettes of people are visible, some with their hands raised in the air. In the background, several graduation caps are seen flying through the air, suggesting a commencement ceremony. The overall scene is one of joy and achievement.



Choose This Path if

- Your education was earned outside the United States or Canada
- You DO NOT hold a license to practice architecture anywhere in the world, or
- You DO have a foreign license, but you are not eligible for the Foreign Architect Path

EESA EVALUATION

If you were educated abroad but do not have a license that meets the Foreign Architect

Path requirements, you may be able to pursue an Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA). Through EESA, you can fulfill the education component of the path to licensure in the United States.

NOTE: *If you are already pursuing the Foreign Architect Path, you should not complete an EESA.*

Administered by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), an EESA compares your academic transcript to the NCARB Education Standard. The evaluation determines whether your education meets the standards for licensure and identifies any deficiencies that must be addressed. You may need to complete additional coursework in order to satisfy any deficiencies.

TIP: *Any fees for EESA are non-refundable and paid to NAAB—not NCARB. Contact our Customer Relations team to confirm that EESA is the right path for you.*

Steps to complete an EESA:

- 1 Navigate to my.ncarb.org and create an NCARB Record
- 2 Reach out to our Customer Relations team, who can review your education history and provide next steps, at ncarb.org/contact

Some jurisdictions do not accept an EESA for foreign education. Double-check that the jurisdiction you are pursuing licensure in accepts EESA through the Licensing Requirements Tool at ncarb.org/requirements.

After the EESA

After satisfying any deficiencies identified by your EESA and having your education re-evaluated, you need to complete the examination requirement. You also need to complete the experience requirement, which can be done at any time after you create your NCARB Record. Read more on [page 16](#).

FOREIGN ARCHITECT PATH

The background of the page is a blue-tinted photograph of a person sitting at a desk in a modern office. The person is seen from the side, working on a laptop. There are several computer monitors on the desk, and the office has large windows in the background, suggesting a bright, airy environment. The overall aesthetic is professional and contemporary.

Choose This Path if

- Your license is active and in good standing at the point of application.
- Your license allows unlimited practice—the design of all types and sizes of buildings.
- Your country's credentialing authority has a system for tracking disciplinary action for architects.
- You have no record of disciplinary action.

Additional requirements are documented in the *NCARB Certification Guidelines*. Learn more at ncarb.org/certificate.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE FOREIGN ARCHITECT PATH

1 Use our Licensing Requirements Tool (ncarb.org/requirements) to confirm that the U.S. jurisdiction where you want to earn a license accepts the Foreign Architect Path.

- 2** After navigating to the Licensing Requirements Tool, select the “Reciprocal Requirements” tab and then select “NCARB Certificates granted through the Foreign Architect Path are accepted” under “Requirements.”
- 3** Contact your jurisdiction directly to ensure they will accept the NCARB Certificate through the Foreign Architect Path, as their rules are subject to change.
- 4** Establish an NCARB Record via my.ncarb.org. Your Record is a verified account of your professional history, which you'll need to complete the exam and experience requirements. Add your foreign license and education to your NCARB Record.

- 5 You will be prompted to indicate your interest in the Foreign Architect Path by checking a box in your Record. You will receive next steps via email.
- 6 Have your official academic transcript and Credential Verification Form sent to NCARB so we can confirm your eligibility for the Foreign Architect Path. NCARB cannot verify your documents until you have created an NCARB Record, which is different from a free My NCARB account.

TIP: You can download the Foreign Architect Checklist to help you keep track of all the documents you'll need to complete your application. Learn more at ncarb.org/foreign.

NOTE: The Foreign Architect Path application includes a fee, but you will not be billed until after your required credentials are approved.

The application fee does not include the cost of completing the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®).

Submitting Paperwork

You'll need to have your official paperwork submitted to verify your education and foreign license before you are accepted into the Foreign Architect Path. All forms and transcripts must be submitted in English.

- **Foreign License:** Complete Part A of the Credential Verification Form (available at ncarb.org/foreign), which is used to verify the architecture license issued by your country. Then, your registration/license/credentialing authority for your foreign architecture license (not your university) will complete Part B. They will submit the final form to NCARB.

***TIP:** Your credentialing authority is the organization or entity that issues architecture licenses and regulates the practice of architecture within your country.*

- **School transcripts:** You can have your school's transcripts verified and added to your NCARB Record either electronically or physically. The document must be translated into English. Learn more at ncarb.org/foreign.

Application Review

After the required documentation has been received, NCARB will review your Record and contact you within 45 days with an update on your eligibility for the Foreign Architect Path.

Once you have applied to the Foreign Architect Path, you can begin work on NCARB's experience requirement for certification. After your eligibility has been confirmed, you can start work on the examination. Learn more about the AXP and ARE on [page 16](#).

Once you've completed the AXP and ARE, you'll need to submit a second Credential Verification Form to NCARB so we can confirm your license remains in good standing. You'll then be issued an NCARB Certificate, which you can use to apply for reciprocal licensure in a U.S. jurisdiction.

NEXT STEPS





For Candidates Pursuing the Foreign Architect or Foreign Educated Paths

Your next steps are the
Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®)
and the
Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®).

ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (AXP)

To complete this program, you will need to report 3,740 hours across six experience areas. At least 1,860 hours must be earned by working under an

architect who is licensed in the U.S. or Canada—although these can also be earned while working abroad. In most cases, you can report up to 1,860 hours working for an architect licensed in another country.

- **If you are unlicensed:** To earn full credit toward the AXP for your work, you must report experience within eight months. The largest block of time you can submit in one report is six months for full credit. Experience that was earned more than eight months ago is still eligible for 50 percent credit for up to five years.
- **If you have a foreign license:** There are no time limitations when documenting your hours. As an architect, any qualifying experience will count toward the AXP—regardless of when you earned it.

TIP: *You can start earning experience before your EESA evaluation is complete or before you have been made eligible for the Foreign Architect Path.*

Learn more about the AXP at ncarb.org/gain-axp-experience.

ARCHITECT REGISTRATION EXAMINATION (ARE)

The ARE is a six-part exam designed to test your knowledge and skills in architecture.

You can begin scheduling ARE divisions under the Foreign Educated

Path after your education requirement is complete. For the Foreign Architect Path, you can begin testing once NCARB has confirmed your eligibility and you've paid your Certificate application fee.

TIP: NCARB offers all ARE candidates free study resources, including a free practice exam for each division of the ARE.

Learn more about the ARE at [ncarb.org/are](https://www.ncarb.org/are).

FOREIGN EDUCATED PATH: COMPLETING YOUR LICENSE

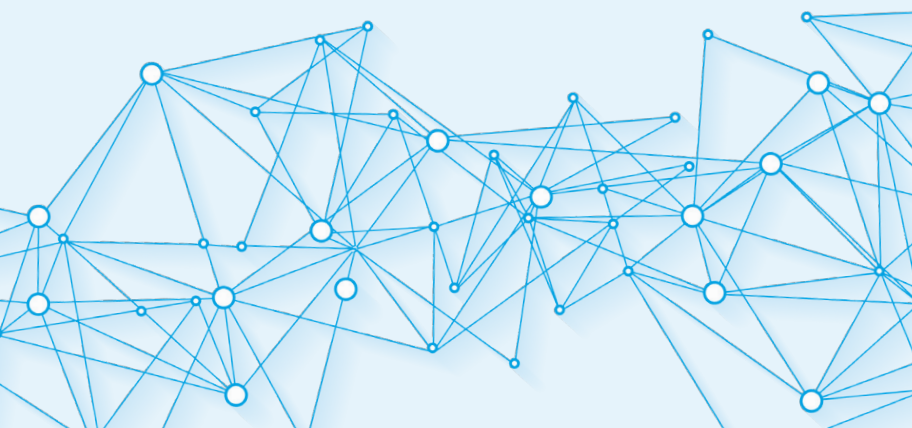
After completing the AXP and ARE, NCARB will evaluate your NCARB Record and have your application sent to your jurisdiction's licensing board for processing. From there, you will be eligible to practice licensure in your jurisdiction.

To practice in more than one jurisdiction, earn free continuing education credits, and use the NCARB credential in your title, consider NCARB certification. This tool—separate from your architect license—can help you achieve mobility and professional growth.



FOREIGN ARCHITECT PATH: RECEIVING YOUR NCARB CERTIFICATE

Once NCARB has confirmed you meet the requirements for certification through this path, you will be issued a Certificate number. You will then be able to use your NCARB Certificate to apply for reciprocal licensure in a U.S. jurisdiction that accepts the Foreign Architect Path.



MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

A person in a suit is shown from the chest down, holding a pen and writing on a document. The image is overlaid with a blue tint. The text 'MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the top half of the image.



Choose This Path if

You have a foreign license from Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom.

With an increasingly global economy, your practice is no longer limited to the location of your initial license. NCARB has established agreements with the licensing authorities of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. If you are an architect in any of these countries, you may be eligible to practice in the United States.

To become licensed in the United States under a mutual recognition agreement (MRA), you will need to obtain the NCARB Certificate. Your chosen U.S. jurisdiction may also have its own requirements for licensure.

TIP: *Architects who are licensed in their home country through another reciprocal licensing arrangement are not eligible for an MRA.*

If you are eligible for a mutual recognition agreement, you do not need to complete the ARE or the AXP. Some post-licensure experience may be required, depending on the agreement.

If you do not meet the requirements listed below, you have the option to pursue the Foreign Architect Path. Learn more on [page 10](#).



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AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

If you are an architect from Australia or New Zealand, contact the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) or the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB) before starting the process with NCARB.

To be eligible for the NCARB Certificate under this arrangement, you must:

- Be licensed and in good standing in a signatory jurisdiction in Australia or New Zealand
- Hold a current AACA Statement (only applicable for Australian architects)

CANADA



If you are an architect from Canada, contact the Regulatory Organizations of Architecture in Canada (ROAC) before starting the process with NCARB.

To be eligible for the NCARB Certificate under this agreement, you must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Be licensed and in good standing in a Canadian jurisdiction
- Maintain your principal place of practice in a signatory jurisdiction
- Have at least 2,000 hours of post-licensure experience in your home country

MEXICO



If you are a Mexican architect seeking licensure in the U.S., contact the Consejo Nacional de Registro de la Certificación Profesional (CONARC) for more information.

To be eligible for the NCARB Certificate through this agreement, you must:

- Be licensed and in good standing in a Mexican jurisdiction
- Hold a degree in architecture from an accredited program or the equivalent
- Have a minimum of 5 years of post-licensure experience in your home country, two years of which must be in responsible control of the comprehensive practice of architecture
- Be a CONARC Certificate holder


NOTE: *If you do not meet the requirements as listed, you have the option to pursue the Foreign Architect Path to Certification. Please see [page 12](#).*

UNITED KINGDOM

If you are a U.K. architect seeking licensure in the United States, contact the Architects Registration Board (ARB).

To be eligible for the NCARB Certificate under this agreement, you must:

- Hold a valid license/registration in good standing from your home licensing authority
- Have the right to work in the locality in which you seek registration (typically granted through a visa or other work immigration route)
- Have secured ARB-prescribed qualifications issued by schools of architecture in the United Kingdom at Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 level
- Be registered and in good standing with ARB



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the requirements for submitting a translated transcript?

All official transcripts must be submitted in English directly from your school or translation service and must include:

- 1) Confirmation that the transcript was provided by the school or the applicant in the university's original sealed envelope if mailed, or that the transcript was provided directly by the school via email.
- 2) Confirmation that the translation was completed using the original sealed or electronic document.
- 3) The original, untranslated document. NCARB does not require course descriptions and will not accept equivalency or evaluation reports.

Learn more about translation requirements at ncarb.org/foreign.

Who can translate my transcripts?

Certified translations can only be accepted through official and verifiable sources such as the university, legal, notary, embassy, or other certified translation services. These providers do not have to be based in the United States or American Translators Association (ATA) certified.

What countries does NCARB have mutual recognition arrangements with?

NCARB currently has agreements to facilitate reciprocal licensure with the licensing/registration entities or their representatives in Australia, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

What is an EESA evaluation? Do I need one?

Administered by the NAAB, the Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) compares your academic transcript to the NCARB Education Standard and determines whether your education meets the requirement for licensure or NCARB certification. You may need an EESA evaluation if you do not hold a degree from a NAAB-accredited program. If you are pursuing the Foreign Architect Path, do not get an EESA.

Can I apply for certification through the Foreign Architect Path if the country where I am credentialed does not have a regulatory body?

To be eligible for certification through the Foreign Architect Path, you must be credentialed in a foreign country that has a system in place for disciplinary action. If this does not exist, you are not eligible for this path. You may still, however, apply for initial registration as a foreign-educated licensure candidate.

Does my foreign experience count toward fulfillment of the Architectural Experience Program (AXP)?

A maximum of 1,860 hours may be earned for work completed in a foreign country under the supervision of a licensed architect in that country under experience setting O. If you are working in an architecture firm located outside of the U.S. or Canada but the architect is licensed in the U.S. or Canada, any hours earned would qualify as experience setting A.

As a foreign architect made eligible for the Foreign Architect Path to NCARB Certification, does the AXP reporting requirement apply to me?

No. Applicants pursuing the Foreign Architect Path are not limited by the reporting requirement. You may submit any previous experience pre- or post-licensure for fulfillment of AXP.

If I don't qualify for one path, can I pursue another?

Yes! As long as you meet the requirements, you may pursue any path to become licensed in the United States.

What is the difference between applying for licensure as a foreign-educated applicant and applying for certification through the Foreign Architect Path?

As a foreign-educated applicant pursuing initial licensure, you will need to have your education evaluated by the NAAB if required by the architectural registration board in the jurisdiction where you seek licensure. As a foreign architect applying for NCARB certification, you will not need an EESA evaluation in most cases.

Will I be able to test online if I'm located internationally?

Yes. You can take the ARE online from anywhere in the world, as long as your testing environment meets the technical and environmental requirements for online proctoring. Note: Some countries may have restrictions in place that do not allow online proctoring.

Could I be eligible for an EESA discount?

If you graduated from an accredited program offered by a Canberra Accord signatory after 2010 or a NAAB International Certified program, you may be eligible for an EESA fee discount. Learn more at ncarb.org/foreign.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

about the path to United States licensure for international applicants, read the Certification Guidelines or visit:

ncarb.org/foreign



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The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, in collaboration with licensing boards, facilitates the licensure and credentialing of architects to support the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

WWW.NCARB.ORG